

# BAITING MOTHS

## NATURAL ATTRACTANTS

Moths are naturally attracted to the scents of flowers and tree sap from sapsucker wells, woodpecker holes and broken branches. Large hardwoods also have seep holes that attract hornets and brushfoot butterflies during the day. These areas can be located during the day and then re-visited at night. If one wanted they could drill their own holes in late winter and spring when the sap is flowing.

## SUGARING

For those who live where sugar maples occur, maple sap, either from taps or from natural sources such as sapsucker wells, will attract moths in the late winter/early spring months when the sap starts running. Maple sap buckets can be filled with pinions and sallow's in February and March.

You can create your own "bait" by mixing various ingredients. Brown or white sugar usually makes up the largest percentage of the mix, with a variety of other ingredients mixed or blended in. The bait can be placed as is or allowed to ferment for a time. It can then be applied to a tree using a brush in a one foot square patch about 4-5 feet off the ground. The consistency should be gelatinous; you don't want the bait to drip to the ground which would attract ants that detracts moths.

- Brown or white sugar
- Bananas, peaches or other fruit – over ripe
- Molasses or maple syrup
- Stale beer or wine



Another method is to take cotton cord (about the diameter of a pencil), cut into 1-2 foot long sections, dip in your fermented wine or juice, and hang on saplings and tree limbs along a path in the woods. A sponge soaked in fermented wine or juices/concoction and hung from a limb also works. Basically any concoction that includes sugar and rotten fruit that is near or at fermentation stage will work; alcohol is not necessary. Experiment with different recipes and make notes of what is productive in your area.



## CHECKING YOUR BAIT

Bait should be applied just before dusk, the first few hours of darkness are usually the most productive. A red lens covering over your flashlight or headlamp is preferred to not scare the moths away. A headlamp works well for detecting moths eye shine at a distance, but is visible only to the one wearing the light. It is also helps to be quiet in your approach and voice. It helps if you place your baits along a familiar trail, wooded road or field edge you are familiar with so you can safely follow and locate the baits. If you place bait near living areas with floodlights the moths will become accustomed to the light and won't scare off as easily.

Depending on weather, you will need to re-apply your concoction every couple of nights or so. During the summer months, several species of Catocalas among others come to sugar bait but never to lights.